

## **Social Engagement**

**Presented by**  
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### ***Problems and Solutions:***

#### **Problem I**

Older individuals, especially those with vision impairment, often have great difficulty safely crossing intersections, especially busy ones, because they may have difficulty seeing the traffic light as well as the WALK and DON'T WALK sign.

#### **Solution I**

Seek funding from the local Department of Transportation as well as the Business Improvement Districts to help underwrite the costs (e.g. such as New York City did in collaboration with the Lighthouse International) of developing a pilot project on installing Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS) at key street crossings in major cities in the United States.

#### **Problem II**

While driving safely is a key concern for everyone, changes in the aging eye make it especially relevant for older adults.

### **Solution**

Team up with the automobile manufacturers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and the optical industry to help to underwrite the cost of mounting a nationwide educational campaign for keeping older drivers safely on the road by emphasizing:

- The importance of regular eye check-ups as you age.
- The deleterious effects of some medications on driving.
- The danger that may result from problems of glare at night.
- The problems of sudden changes in light level when driving.
- The effects of eye conditions, especially cataracts, on driving safely.
- How to maximize safety when driving.
- Insuring the use of lenses, filters, as well as specialized lenses (where applicable) to maximize safety.
- The possible safety factor, as well as cost savings, in accessing public and alternative transportation.

### **Problem III**

Society is demanding the use of the computer:

1. To access information
2. To communicate
3. To continue lifelong education, especially with online courses.

Aging and vision loss, however, often pose serious obstacles in the challenge of accessing the computer.

### **Solution III**

Partner with computer and software manufacturers to underwrite the cost of developing and organizing a volunteer and community network of computer savvy high school and college students, as well as retirees, to teach:

- The basics of computers, with emphasis on the built-in accessibility features (e.g. hi contrast and speech output)
- The use of specialized software when vision loss is present (e.g. navigating the Web by voice and magnification software)

Offer computer programs at:

- Vision rehabilitation agencies
- Low vision services in Optometry Universities and Colleges
- Optometric low vision practices
- Senior and community centers

**Problem IV**

Traveling independently is often linked with issues of quality of life. However, it may be intimidating to someone as they get older. Independent travel is especially challenging and daunting in the presence of vision loss.

**Solution IV**

Team with seniors organizations, such as AARP and the Seniors Coalition to help educate the public as well as:

- Insure coverage and access to eye care for all older individuals, especially those with vision impairment.
- Support reimbursement for low vision aids for mobility, such as telescopic lenses and filters, and GPS systems